

## **REMARKS**

### **I. Introduction**

With the cancellation herein of claim 12, claims 1, 2, 4 to 11 and 13 to 17 are pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

### **II. Objections to the Claims**

While Applicant does not necessarily agree with the merits of any of these objections, to facilitate matters, the claims has been amended herein without prejudice as suggested, thereby rendering moot these objections. Withdrawal of these objections is therefore respectfully requested.

### **III. Allowed Claims**

Applicant notes with appreciation the indication that claims 1, 2 and 4 to 11 are allowed.

### **IV. Allowable Subject Matter**

Applicant notes with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter included in claim 14. In this regard, the Examiner will note that claim 14 has been rewritten herein in independent form. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claim 14 is in condition for immediate allowance.

In addition, claims 13 and 15 to 17 have been amended herein without prejudice to depend from claim 14. As such, it is respectfully submitted that claims 13 and 15 to 17 are also in condition for immediate allowance.

### **V. Rejection of Claims 12, 13 and 15 to 17**

As regards the rejection of claims 12, 13 and 15 to 17, while Applicant does not necessarily agree with the merits of this rejection, to facilitate matters, claim 12 has been canceled herein without prejudice, and claims 13 and 15 to 17 have been amended herein without prejudice to depend from claim 14, which was indicated to include allowable subject matter. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the present rejection is moot, and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

**VI. Conclusion**

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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